

Chief Executive NHSScotland
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NHS Chairs
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Dear Colleagues

The Cabinet Secretary, in her statement to the Scottish Parliament on Tuesday <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12669>, set out that our health service will remain on an emergency footing for a further 100 days. I am writing to you today to set out what our focus will be during this period.

We will have three core tasks:

- Commence work toward delivery of as many of our normal services as possible, in a safe manner, with an immediate focus on the most urgent care requirements;
- Ensure capacity remains available to deal with endemic Covid-19; and,
- Begin preparation of our health and care system for the challenges of the next 9 months and particularly the 2020/21 winter season.

I am very grateful for all the work that you and your teams have undertaken on remobilisation of our system. I want you to be mindful that this must be undertaken in a planned and coherent manner across Scotland and that it must also be a whole-system approach, with health services and our community services working together for the communities they serve.

I also want to ensure that we hold onto the many improvements that we have achieved during the pandemic. For example, we want to maintain the progress on our new services to patients such as Near Me and we should continue to support and develop access to GP services through increased digital consultations.



Working over the next 100 days, as leaders, we must also recognise the enormous commitment of our staff and the impact that this pandemic will have had on them. I want you to ensure that, while we move to bring services back, we also make time for both individuals and teams to have recovery time. Support is available for our colleagues and you should encourage them to engage with that.

The importance of allowing recovery time now is highlighted by our consideration of the tasks that we need to plan for over the next few months, such as emerging risks around winter, the requirement to maintain a Covid -19 response and our requirement to resume paused services with the inevitable backlog of patients.

The Cabinet Secretary retains the direction making and emergency powers that allow Scottish Ministers to secure the effective continuance of services through the on-going challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that the Cabinet Secretary will be utilising the direction making powers, where necessary, to instruct NHS boards to carry out certain actions. Where directions are issued, these will not be for local interpretation. They must be implemented in full and without delay in order to maintain the resilience of our NHS.

The agility of the system in responding to the first phase has shown the capability of you and your teams to respond to a largely unexpected and severe outbreak, which had an enormous impact on our society. I want us now to work together to prepare our system to begin to return to normal, with safety as our primary concern – but we should also ensure that we use the next 100 days to embed the improvements we have made, ensure the wellbeing of our colleagues and remain vigilant and responsive to any re-emergence of this virus.

My sincere thanks to you and your team who have achieved so much in such a short space of time.

Yours sincerely



JOHN CONNAGHAN CBE
Interim Chief Executive NHSScotland